

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chairperson
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chairperson:

In accordance with 44 U.S.C. § 3903 and the relevant provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, I am transmitting to Congress the Semiannual Report of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) covering the 6-month period of October 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020, along with the following information as required by law.

This letter meets GPO management's statutory obligation to provide comments on the OIG's report and highlights management actions taken on the OIG's recommendations, which may relate to more than one reporting period.

Hiring in the OIG. The report states that the OIG "continues to expend significant efforts towards hiring with limited success." While we would all prefer that Human Capital actions move as quickly as possible, there have been some delays attributable to the significant number of actions required from the Human Capital department stemming from the reorganization of the OIG three times since May 1, 2019 (May, July, and September, 2019). These actions include classification of 10 position descriptions in the last 10 months. Nonetheless, of the 10 actions currently in process, six selections have been made with two employees onboarding this week, two Certificate of Eligibles have been issued to the hiring manager, two job announcements are currently posted, and 1 job announcement is in development to accommodate an OIG request to hire a Federal employee instead of a contractor. We will continue to do our best to improve responsiveness for all customers of our Human Capital department, including the OIG.

Management Challenges. In the fall 2019 Semi-Annual Report to Congress, the OIG introduced four new Management Challenges.

Management Challenge 1. Management Challenge 1 continues to state, "There are key positions that remain unfilled in the critical areas of acquisition services, finance, and human capital."

As was first noted in the fall 2019 transmittal letter, I want to continue to highlight the considerable progress management is making in this area. As of April 2020, there are 4 recruit to fill actions in Acquisition Services currently being processed, and once the selectees are onboard, this unit will be at **100% staffing**. There are 21 position vacancies in Finance and 9 in Human Capital. Of these vacancies, 13 have been placed on hold by the Managing Director, and all but one position (just recently vacated) of the remaining 17 vacancies are in the process of actively being filled.

In 2017 the average length of time to recruit to fill positions was 157 days. Our current average length of time to recruit to fill positions is 43 days, which represents a **73% improvement**. This remarkable improvement was accomplished through:

- Implementing the use of subject matter experts (SMEs); recruitment and hiring consultations; selective factors; and assessments in the hiring process.
- Senior management's support to staff the Human Capital Office to support the changes needed to improve the hiring process.
- Process improvements in managing the hiring actions.
- Training and development opportunities to improve core competencies of the human capital staff.

Management Challenge 2. With the appointment of a new permanent Director, and since the agency reported positive financial results for FY 2019, OIG has updated Management Challenges 2 and 3 respectively.

The update to Management Challenge 2 states "The confirmation of Director Halpern in December 2019 was an important step toward addressing this management challenge; however, the more substantive challenge involves developing a cogent vision and installing a team to realize that vision."

As someone who spent a long time as a customer of GPO, I've been clear about my vision for the agency since my confirmation hearing: it needs to meet its customers "where they are," rather than requiring customers to conform to GPO's requirements, while providing the kinds of products and services that our customers want. Future development of a new five-year strategic plan will reflect this customer-based focus. I also plan to ensure that our customers have increased awareness of GPO's strategic goals, capabilities, and strategies, which are developed through a robust strategic planning process that's been in place for the last several years. In regard to building out a team of senior leaders to support my customer-focused vision, the good news is that the existing executive team has recognized the need for a greater focus on our customers and has been receptive to making the kinds of changes necessary to recognize that vision. I selected a permanent General Counsel in January and am in the process of filling additional permanent agency leadership positions.

In light of GPO's continued progress, I look forward to the OIG's updated comments on the Management Challenges in the next Semi-Annual Report. GPO will continue to work with the OIG to take the necessary actions to address and resolve the Management Challenges facing the agency while working to meet the information product and service requirements of Congress, Federal agencies, and the public.

OIG Audit and Inspection Reports – Current and Prior Period Outstanding Recommendations.

During the reporting period, the OIG issued 6 audit and inspection reports addressing different GPO programs and activities containing a total of 8 program improvement recommendations.

GPO's Annual Financial Audit. During the reporting period, the independent annual audit of GPO's financial statements for FY 2019 was concluded. For the 23rd consecutive year, GPO received an "unmodified," or clean, opinion on its financial statements.

In connection with the audit, the OIG issued a management letter reporting operational matters involving internal controls not included in the consolidated financial audit report. The report made four recommendations for improving internal controls over financial reporting and other operating efficiencies. Management has concurred with the report's recommendations. Also in connection with the audit, an assessment of IT controls was performed. The report did not contain any recommendations.

Status of Audit and Inspection Report Recommendations. There are no audit or inspection report recommendations over 6 months old which are still awaiting a management decision. There are 2 open recommendations on which corrective action has not been completed in more than one year. GPO has provided a response to the OIG on each of the two open recommendations and will continue to proactively work to address recommendations from the OIG.

OIG Investigations. The OIG concluded 36 investigations during the reporting period.

Other Matters. None.

Statistical Tables. Statistical tables as required by law are enclosed.

If you should require additional information with respect to this report, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. James McCarthy, GPO's Congressional Relations Specialist, on 202-512-1968, or by email at jmccarthy@gpo.gov.

Sincerely,



HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN
Director
U.S. Government Publishing Office

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Rodney Davis
Ranking Member, Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman, Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member, Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate

ENCLOSURE I

**AUDIT AND INSPECTION REPORTS ISSUED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD WITH
QUESTIONED COSTS, FUNDS PUT TO BETTER USE, AND OTHER MONETARY IMPACT**

<u>Report Number</u>	<u>Number of Recommendations</u>	<u>Questioned Costs (\$)</u>	<u>Funds Put to Better Use (\$)</u>	<u>Other Monetary Impact (\$)</u>
20-01	3	109,975	1,089	0
20-02	0	0	0	0
20-03	4	0	0	0
20-04	0	0	0	0
20-05	1	0	0	0
20-06	0	0	0	0

ENCLOSURE II

**AUDIT AND INSPECTION REPORTS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS THAT FUNDS BE
PUT TO BETTER USE, QUESTIONED COSTS, AND OTHER MONETARY IMPACT**

	<u>Number of Reports</u>	<u>Funds Put to Better Use and Other Monetary Impact</u>
Reports for which no management decisions were made by the beginning of the reporting period	0	0
Reports issued during reporting period	6	111,064
 Reports for which a management decision was made during the report period:		
1. Dollar value of recommendations not agreed to by management		0
2. Dollar value of recommendations agreed to by management		0
Reports for which management decision was made by the end of the reporting period	6	111,064
Reports for which no management decision was made within 6 months of issuance	0	0